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In this first issue of 1958, we have chosen to put a rich and varied fare before our readers.

Professor Dunstan, himself a delegate last September to the First North American Faith and Order Conference at Oberlin, Ohio, edits two important documents prepared for that great ecumenical gathering by Pre-Conference Study Groups. Professor Samuel Miller permits us to publish five meditations delivered last autumn to staff and students of Andover Newton at week-day chapel services in Colby Hall. Professor Nels Ferré surveys and comments on significant publications during 1957 in the field of theology.

To Dr. Paul Minear, Secretary of Study and Program for the Oberlin Conference, who encouraged us to publish the Minneapolis and Toronto briefs, and to my colleagues Dunstan, Miller, and Ferré, many hearty thanks!

S. MACLEAN GILMOUR, *Editor.*

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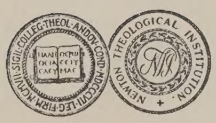

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Two Papers Submitted to the Oberlin Conference by Pre-Conference Study Groups

J. Leslie Dunstan

The First North American Faith and Order Conference was held at Oberlin, Ohio, during the early days of September, 1957. The delegates, representing thirty-nine denominations and organizations, gave thought to "The Nature of the Unity We Seek" as members of Christ's church. Those present were organized into twelve sections for study and discussion. These sections were drawn together into three divisions. One division dealt with "The Nature of the Unity We Seek: In Faithfulness to the Gospel"; the second with "The Nature of the Unity We Seek: In Terms of Organizational Structure"; and the third with "The Nature of the Unity We Seek: In View of Cultural Pressures." Before the Conference ended each sectional group that had dealt with a particular phase of its Division's theme presented its report to a Divisional meeting. Each Division then prepared a report out of the findings of its four sections, and this was presented to, and in a few cases edited by, a plenary session of the entire Conference. Complicated as this procedure may sound it was quite the opposite in actual practice. At Oberlin the delegates moved from sectional meetings to divisional meetings to plenary sessions with scarcely any confusion and with a clear understanding of the purpose for which each group had gathered.

The Section reports and the Division reports, together with "A Message to the Churches" prepared by the entire Conference, are to be published and will be available in the near future. This volume will constitute a landmark in the history of ecumenical relations in this country, for it will contain the findings of the first group of North American Christians to deal with matters of Faith and Order. All who have a concern for the present divided state of the church will want to study it carefully.

When the delegates met at Oberlin they had in their hands papers prepared by pre-conference study groups. Two years before the Oberlin meeting a program commission was organized by the sponsoring Church Councils (Canadian, American, World), and Professor Paul Minear of Yale Divinity School was asked to direct the preparation for the Conference. Sixteen Study Groups were organized in that number of cities across the nation and in Canada; topics were assigned or chosen by those groups; and a great deal of work was done. Before Oberlin each of those groups prepared a

report of its work, and these reports, when the conference opened, were made available to the sections for which they had relevance.

Generally speaking, the Orientation Papers (as they were called) were of value only to the Sections to which they were related; the work that had been done in preparing the reports and the information contained in the reports came to be merged in the study that was carried forward by the Sections. Two of these papers, however, were of general interest. They were widely sought after by the delegates to the Conference, and they were cited in the addresses given by the Chairmen of the World Council Faith and Order Commissions as they reported to the Conference on the work done by their respective bodies. That these papers were used in this wider fashion suggests their importance for the main subject of the Conference itself.

Learning that these papers would not otherwise be available in printed form, the Editor of the BULLETIN asked Dr. Minear, the Secretary for Study and Program, for permission to publish them. This was readily granted on the understanding that some re-editing might be done to fit the material to interests of the BULLETIN readers and to put the documents, torn as they are from their context, into a more general framework. One paper, a rather extensive study of the theological beliefs of church people carried forward with the desire to discover the way a difference in belief contributed to the divisions within the church, was prepared by the Minneapolis Study Group. The second paper, a careful analysis of the difference between Order and Organization in the church and the relationship of the one to the other, was prepared by the Toronto Study Group, a group that had been appointed by the Canadian Council of Churches as its Commission on Faith and Order.

Agreement and Disagreement on Christian Doctrines
A Report of the Minneapolis Study Committee

The Minneapolis Study Committee defined its task as follows: (1) To inquire into the extent of theological agreement and disagreement between contemporary representatives of the various denominations; (2) To inquire into the relation between existing differences and the historic positions as defined in the creedal or confessional statements of the various church bodies; (3) To ascertain whether the apparent theological agreement in contemporary churches may not be due to indifference to theological issues.

The Committee believes that the first and third of these goals were adequately achieved and that its data can yield significant results with respect to the second goal, but it is not in a position to submit statistical evidence to support these conclusions.

For its task the Committee devised a "Check Sheet of Christian Beliefs" and invited pastors and congregations within the various denominations throughout Minnesota (or the denominational jurisdication that most nearly coincided with it) to assist in ascertaining the facts regarding the beliefs currently held by clergy and laity in the churches in this area.

Approximately 30,000 copies of this Check Sheet were mailed out on request to approximately seven hundred congregations. The total number of returns was 5,704, of which 5,162 were from laity and 272 from clergy, while the origin of 270 was not specified. Ten denominations reported more than twenty returns, and these have been studied and compared for our purposes.

The results leave no doubt that doctrinal discussion is relevant to the ecumenical movement, especially from the viewpoint of the laity. The clergy believed that it was least important to agree on the doctrine of the ministry (15% checking this item) and most important to agree on the doctrine of Christ (54% checking this item). The Bible and the Basis of Authority each were checked by 35% of the clergy. More than 70% of the laity believed agreement was necessary on the doctrine of Christ, and almost the same percentage on the doctrine of the Bible. There was also agreement that the doctrine of the ministry was least important (28% checking this item). Other suggested items were checked by approximately one third of the respondents.

The consensus seems to be that the crucial doctrinal questions affecting Christian unity are (1) Jesus Christ, (2) the Bible, and (3) the Basis of Authority.

Here is a summary of the more important findings.

1. *The Nature of the Unity We Seek*

It is clear that neither clergy nor laity feel any great urge toward organizational unity. They also disown "a spiritual oneness without interest in organizational coöperation." A substantial number of clergy respondents (30%) believe Christian unity means "a spiritual oneness manifested partially in organizational coöperation" (compared to 7.17% of the laity). However, 50.26% of the laity and 36.57% of the clergy believe it means "a spiritual oneness indifferent to organizational forms but based on agreement as to the fundamentals

of the Christian faith." 23% of the laity and 18% of the clergy are content with "the various denominations respecting one another's validity as churches."

It would appear that the movement toward unity cannot rely heavily on the desire for unity in the contemporary churches. It must rest on an imperative that grows out of the Christian gospel and the very nature of the Christian faith, about which churches must become more aware than seems presently to be the case.

2. *Homogeneity in Faith*

Is there a homogeneity in faith among these respondents? Theological expression is not necessarily the most accurate guage of Christian faith. How much theological diversity can exist within the fellowship of the "believers" has always been a living issue for the Christian church. No Christian denomination, historically or currently, has completely identified a single theological formulation with the existence of faith, nor, on the other hand, asserted the complete irrelevance of theological formulation to the existence of faith. It is possible to be a heretic within every denomination.

Generally speaking, "faith in Christ" has involved a judgment concerning Christ's relation to God and Christ's relation to the believer. Christians have asserted that God was in Christ in some unique sense which they have characteristically described in a doctrine of the divinity or Deity of Christ, and they have asserted that he mediated to the believer the forgiving grace of God in such a manner as to be both Lord and Saviour. If the essence of the Christian faith is in these two affirmations, there is very substantial homogeneity in faith among the respondents to the Check Sheet. 82% of the clergy in all the denominations and 74% of the laity chose responses concerning Jesus Christ which clearly asserted his divinity. An additional 13.48% of the clergy and 15.48% of the laity were willing to say that he "uniquely revealed the nature of God." If this be permitted to imply divinity in a more general sense, 93.48% of the clergy and 89.58% of the laity were willing to assert his divinity.

The overwhelming choice among the responses dealing with the ground of salvation was "God, in Christ, freely offers forgiveness to all who repent and believe in Him" (70.53% of the clergy, 62.69% of laity). If one adds two other responses which also assert Christ's central importance to salvation ("Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for our sins"; "Jesus Christ has conquered sin, death, and the devil"), the percentage of responses which affirm that Christ mediates

to the believer the forgiving grace of God in such a manner as to be both Lord and Saviour becomes 89.36% for the clergy and 93.66% for the laity.

Since our knowledge of Christ and of the faith of the early church has come to us by way of the Bible through the church, it is natural that our faith in Christ should also include a judgment with regard to the Bible and the church. There is very substantial agreement among the respondents that the Bible is the "basis for authority" (70.15% of laity, 63.03% of clergy), although there is considerable divergence with regard to the authentic sources of the interpretation of its meaning. "The Holy Spirit revealed in the conscience of the Christian individual and the Christian community" was checked by 15.67% of the clergy and 19.11% of the laity. There was surprising unanimity with respect to the doctrine of the church, which for the large majority of respondents (68.23% of laity and 67.28% of clergy) is "the fellowship of all those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour." This definition also further underscores the homogeneity of faith concerning Christ and the ground of salvation.

The findings would seem to support the observation that there is a large measure of homogeneity in the faith of contemporary Christians across all denominational lines. Whether it is greater or lesser than that which lies behind the creedal formulations may be controversial. Did not the creedal differences arise largely in the explication of the meaning of the Bible, the Person of Christ, the church, and the means of grace, and in the way in which these were related to one another? In some of these areas divergences and disagreements still exist.

3. *Theological Concern*

If the results of the survey are to be taken at face value, it cannot be assumed that the more congenial relations between denominations is the result of indifference to theological issues. When asked to check "all the areas in which you think Christians must agree doctrinally before there can be further development of Christian unity," each of the ten areas which had been used in the Check Sheet was checked by a significant number of both clergy and laity. Each item was checked by not less than one sixth of the clergy and not less than one fourth of the laity. Approximately 70% of the laity checked "Jesus Christ" and "The Bible." These two also led for the clergy, though with a smaller percentage (54% and 35%).

4. *The "Working Faith" of the Churches*

It is assumed that the clergy represent a doctrinal position which is sufficiently close to the "official traditional formularies of faith" to be acceptable to the denominations in which they work. An attempt to establish a somewhat more rigid denominational "pattern" proved unprofitable. But a review of the accepted positions as defined by the responses of the clergy is very illuminating. For instance, all of the respondents could be included in the Methodist church without increasing the diversity which is represented by the Methodist clergy in four of the areas surveyed: the view of the Bible, the basis of authority, the ground of salvation, and the Sacrament of Baptism. 94% could join the Lutheran or Presbyterian churches without increasing the diversity in the views of the Bible which already exists in the clergy of these denominations and to that extent represents an accepted position. Approximately the same would be true with regard to the doctrine of Christ and the ground of salvation. On the latter, the same proportion could also join the Mission Covenant or the Evangelical and Reformed Church. 72% could be Episcopalians or Lutherans on the doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism, and more than 95% could be Presbyterians. Four or five possible positions on the Lord's Supper are taken by Episcopal clergy and these account for 96.38% of the total responses. On the same doctrine Lutheran clergy take two positions, Congregational clergy three, Mission Covenant clergy four, Disciples clergy two, Evangelical and Reformed clergy one, Methodist clergy four, Evangelical United Brethren clergy two, Baptist clergy three, and Presbyterian clergy take all five.

The conclusions which must be drawn from an examination of these responses is that a kind of theological ecumenicity already exists within each of the denominations. The conception of denominational doctrinal positions that are clearly defined and that constitute barriers to be overcome between the denominations is inadequate. The theological questions which are confronted in relations between the denominations are not different from those which are faced within the denominations themselves. The basic question is not the relationship of one theological interpretation to another, but the relationship of all theological interpretations to the faith which these interpretations aim to clarify. No denomination escapes this problem by withdrawal from the ecumenical movement, and none solves it by participation in the ecumenical movement. The certainty of faith may not carry with it an objective certainty in its theological explication. It may be a theological gain to have had this underscored by the manifest theological diversity actually existing among the accredited clergy of

even the more closely-knit and historically oriented Christian communions.

5. *Agreements and Disagreements*

The areas in which the largest measure of agreement exists are 1) the nature of the Church, 2) the ground of salvation, 3) the Person of Christ, and 4) the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If the sample is typical, it should be possible to make progress toward a broadly accepted view of the Sacrament which would remove the barriers to inter-communion. Disagreements are evident in 1) the view of the Bible, 2) the basis of authority (particularly with respect to its authenticated interpretation), 3) the meaning of salvation (perhaps more difference than disagreement), and 4) the meaning of Christian unity.

6. *The Focus of Doctrinal Study*

The agreement indicated on the importance of the question of the Person of Christ and of the primary position of the Bible for further development in Christian unity strongly suggest that these are the points from which to move in further doctrinal discussion. This is further underscored by the disagreement evident in the views of the Bible which is revealed. The unexpected agreement with regard to the Lord's Supper suggests the fruitfulness of work in this area.

7. *Non-member Churches and "The Common Faith"*

The survey does not throw significant light on why some churches have remained outside the ecumenical movement or about the "common faith" that might attract or repel them. With one or two exceptions the churches did not participate extensively in replies. The Mission Covenant responses differ from the general pattern of the responses only in being more specific with respect to certain positions taken (e.g. their view of the Bible, of the church, and of baptism) and avoided. All positions taken by them are also taken by some clergy within the member churches, but not all positions taken by many of the member churches are also taken by them. The very inadequate data suggests that even as between member and non-member churches, the differences that matter most are not theological.

Church Order and Organization
The Toronto Study Group

I. *The Visible Church and Its Order*

The problem of "Church Order" can only arise at all because the church is essentially a visible society, ministering the invisible life in Christ to human persons who live in space and time. The church is a visible reality because the Word of God was made flesh to bring life and light to men (cf. John 1: 1-18).

It will be universally agreed that the mysterious reality of the church's life — fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ — is accessible only to the vision of faith. The church is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, whose free and invisible working can be discerned only by spiritual insight. The life of the church, like the life of each of its members, is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), and faith alone can see the church for what it is: the Bride and Body of Christ. At the same time, this secret truth of the church's life is not simply transcendent and suprahistorical; on the contrary, earthly, temporal creatures are enabled to share in it through visible, historical media, and this too is recognized from one end of Christendom to the other. Whether we focus our attention on the proclamation of the Word, the administration of baptism, the celebration of the eucharist or the maintenance of ministerial order (papal, episcopal, presbyterian, congregational), we are bearing witness to the common conviction that the existence of the church in time is bound up with certain historical institutions whose roots lie in the divine purpose and action. Visibility and historicity are not accidental to the life in Christ, but integral and essential. It is not just that an essentially invisible fellowship of totally unidentifiable Christians somehow finds fortuitous expression in indifferent outward forms; at the very least, we shall need to affirm that God through his chosen media — i.e. the Word and the Sacraments — calls men into the common life of the church and sustains that life through time.

It would, of course, be idle to pretend that all Christians understand the visibility of the church in the same way. To begin with, we differ in our identification of the factors which constitute the historical *esse* of the church; but further, this diversity may be at least partly rooted in different views of the relation of the visible fellowship to the hidden life of the church.

Indeed, it is not too much to say that diversity at its widest stands for radically divergent estimates of the significance of outward

and visible signs as instruments of the Spirit. No one, of course, can or will deny that the outward forms are dead apart from the lifegiving presence of the Spirit. But some will think of the historical structure and life of the church as at once the normal instrument and the sole adequate expression of the Spirit's sanctifying power, while others will tend to see in the historical forms mere vehicles which God, in his sovereign freedom, uses to accomplish his gracious purpose. At the same time, we must observe that all Christians, however variously they may interpret the correlation of Spirit and form, will find it necessary, in formulating their ecclesiology, to take serious account both of the invisible grace and of the visible sign as factors in the making of the earthly, historical church.

In considering the visible aspect of the one church, however, we shall soon discover that a distinction must somehow be made between the visible means by which God continues his church in being as the church and the transitory social forms whose nature it is to come into being and pass away under the pressure of historical change. On the one hand, the wide diversity of such things as liturgical and administrative forms, of which every student of church history must be aware, makes it plain that very few of the external structures known to history can be universally necessary for the historical existence of the church. On the other hand, the very visibility of the church as a continuously identifiable society in history requires some outward forms as enduring elements of its historical structure. While the church lives by the invisible power of Christ and his Spirit, it lives in history as the People of God, created by God through the decisive events of the Old Covenant and re-created in the death and resurrection of the Word-made-flesh, and it can hardly lack all historical connection with its historical foundation. Thus the distinction which for our present purposes has been formulated as a distinction between "Order" and "Organization" — between the universal and the limited, the permanent and the temporary — forces itself on our attention.

II. *The Problem of Order and Organization*

The discussion thus far has brought to the fore several closely related questions, which may be summarized as follows. (1) Is it possible to make any significant distinction between "Order" and "Organization," which will really hold when applied to some particular element of the Christian tradition? (2) Granted that some such discrimination is possible in principle, in what terms are we to make it in practice? (3) Is the concept of "apostolicity" at least one of the criteria by which we must be guided in any attempt to work out

the distinction? This section of the Report will try to deal with the first question, while sections III-IV consider the second and section V the third.

Obviously the fundamental issue is the possibility of making the distinction between order and organization in any clear and definable way. The problem is really one of distinguishing between a "primary" organization (or "order") and a "secondary" organization (or "organization" *simpliciter*) — i.e., between an ordered structure which at all times and in all places serves as the means by which God constitutes the church as the church and an organization which under particular circumstances gives effective expression to some aspect or other of the primary structure. In other words, we are looking for the principles of discrimination between such a primary organization as is essential to the continuous existence and identity of the church as a visible society and the variety of administrative structures through which this "order" can be made operative.

The possibility — indeed, the necessity — of such a distinction can be shown with the help of a reasonably neutral example. The essential order of the church includes the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, as one of the sacraments of the gospel of Christ. For the action of the church to be identifiable as the Eucharist, it will be commonly agreed that it should be celebrated with the elements used in its prototype, the Last Supper, and that the sacred meal celebrated with these elements should be further identified and designated as the Eucharist by an appeal to the original institution. Provided, however, that whatever usage or customary pattern is followed conforms to these minimal requirements, no particular liturgical rite can be regarded as essential to eucharistic order. It may be highly desirable — in fact, the majority of Christians would probably regard it as desirable — that the identity of each Eucharist with the continuous sacramental life of the church should be fully expressed by the use of a form which embodies ancient tradition and historic usage and in this way explicitly reflects the common mind of the church. But such full acceptance of the ecclesiastical tradition is not of the *esse* of eucharistic order; indeed, many will argue that it may involve a distortion of the primary meaning of the Eucharist, while none will be prepared to make a particular liturgical form an essential condition of sacramental validity.

III. *Order and Function in Society*

The use in the New Testament of such terms as "people" (*laos*) and "members of the household" *(oikeioi)* to refer to the church and

its members suggests the inescapable analogy between the church as visible, historical community and the other social groups in which men live. The family, in particular, whose essential functions are readily definable in relation to fundamental human needs, can be considered in such a way as to shed more than a little light on the character of the church's visible structure, and more especially on the distinction between order and (secondary) organization. As we shall see, it is true that the family as universal human institution does not provide a complete parallel to the unique historical community of the church. Indeed, it should be emphasized that no human community or combination of human communities can provide more than a secondary key to the mysterious meaning of the church's invisible-visible reality. Nonetheless, the family does illustrate at least one aspect of our problem, and there may well be some advantage in beginning our search for the required solution outside the church and in isolation from the particular ecclesiastical interests and conflicts which have made it necessary for us to try to make explicit the primary principles of church order.

The institution of "marriage," on which the family is based, is an instance of what we have referred to above as order or primary organization. Unless we are simply to equate marriage with sexual union, on the ground that the physical act is the same in marriage and in promiscuous sexual relations, we shall eventually find it necessary to define marriage as an ordering of biological sexuality with a view to certain specifically human functions of sexual union. By way of a preliminary description, at any rate, let us define this ordering of sexuality in marriage as twofold: (1) the placing of sexual intercourse in the context of mutual responsibility between human persons; (2) the extension of this responsibility to the care and nurture of the human persons who are born as a result of sexual intercourse. On this showing, the minimum definition of marriage, which will distinguish it from casual cohabitation, must involve the recognition of marriage as an ordered relation between husband and wife (or perhaps between husbands and wives), which in turn directly implies an ordered relation between parents and children. Over against this essential order, we can set a variety of organizations (patriarchal, matriarchal, egalitarian, monogamous, polygamous, and so forth), which may more or less effectively serve the functions of marriage in particular cultural, social or economic situations. This kind of contrast between order and organization should be readily intelligible, because it is rooted in real and visible distinctions — between marriage (order) and promiscuity (disorder), on the one hand, and between perceptibly different patterns (organizations) of the marriage relationship, on the other.

Of course, it is obviously true that all this still leaves us with the problem of surveying the boundary between the essential order of marriage and the varying social forms which it may take without losing its identity. In other words, what is primary (order) and what is secondary (organization) in marriage and the family as such? Just because there is no absolute opposition between order and organization, since both are tangible, external patterns, the problem is a complex one. There will arise, for instance, the question of the relation of marriage as such to monogamy. Some might argue that by its very nature marriage is inherently monogamous, because it is only in such a relationship that the sexual union of a man and woman is placed in an order of real mutual responsibility. Others might reply, however, that the natural, functional responsibilities of marriage can be fulfilled in a polygamous organization of the family. Both theories of marriage treat it as an ordering of sexuality in terms of certain functions, in contrast to a disordered sexual activity, and both agree further that this order can be embodied in a variety of organized domestic economies without losing its identity. It is to this essential distinction between constant *function* and diversified *embodiment* that we may usefully look in searching for the principle of discrimination between *order* (or primary organization) and *organization* (in the narrower, secondary sense).

IV. *Order and Function in the Church*

Our next task is to sketch the application of this principle of discrimination to the problem of order and organization in the church itself. We may begin by emphasizing the parallel between the church and the family, even if we shall soon have to go beyond it. The church has to do with the fundamental relation of man to God, just as the family has to do with the primary relationships between human persons. But just as the casual sexual intercourse of a man and a woman does not in itself constitute a marriage between them, so the mere meeting of human beings to think or talk about God or to say prayers does not suffice to constitute them into a church. If we approach the problem of church order in this way, it can be argued that there are three distinguishable functions which together define the essential order of the church — provided always that we recognize on the one hand that the church depends on the powerful presence of the Spirit for the efficacy of its ministrations and the true significance of its fellowship, and remember on the other hand that the Word and Sacraments are God's appointed means of grace within the visible fellowship of his church.

(a) The church must preach the gospel of God's action, towards which Christian faith is essentially directed. Christians may, indeed, differ in their understanding of the role of preaching in the work of man's salvation. But all will agree that apart from the confession and proclamation of the gospel, the church must lack one of the primary elements of its functional order.

(b) The church must administer the sacraments, in which the divine action in history is mediated to men through visible, tangible signs. Without these efficacious signs of the grace which sustains the church and the Christian in faith and love, the church would lack another essential element of its functional order.

(c) The church must necessarily be maintained as a visible fellowship, in and by which the gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered, and through which human communion with God is expressed and shared. Without trying to minimize differences among Christians at this level, we should presumably agree that, apart from the divine call to certain persons to perform these kerygmatic and sacramental functions in the congregation, the church would not exist as an ordered community, so that the entrusting of the ministerial function to particular persons within the fellowship is an element of church order distinct from the gospel which is proclaimed and the sacraments which are administered. This agreement does not, however, extend to the general recognition of a ministry ordered in any particular way as essential to the common life of the church, nor does it involve any unanimity of understanding as to how the authorized ministry is related to the congregation of the faithful.

All that has been affirmed in the last four paragraphs amounts to saying that the church is constituted by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through a particular order which distinguishes the church from every other "religious society," and further, that this order consists of the gospel, the sacraments, and the ministry of Word and Sacrament (however broadly the notion of "ministry" may be defined). Over against this essential *order* we should set the variety of possible *organizations* through which these constant functions may be performed under varying conditions. The gospel, for example, must be propagated and interpreted by the use of a particular catechism or confession, or by some other medium which serves to present the gospel in certain historical circumstances, but can never be simply identified with it. Similarly, the sacraments must be administered according to some particular usage or other, *some* rite which embodies its essentials. Similarly again, the ministry must be maintained in the church according to the usage of particular churches, if it is to be maintained at all — and since it is a distinctive gift of God for the building up

of the Body of Christ (cf. Ephes. 4:11ff), the calling of some to perform ministerial functions must continue if the Christian community is to endure. In each and every one of these cases there seems to be a clear distinction between the function which remains constant through a variety of embodiments — requiring some embodiment, but not bound to any one in particular — and the particular organized expression of that function in a given time and place. To proclaim the gospel is to declare the very basis of the church. To administer the sacraments of the gospel is to build Christians into the church on that declared foundation, through their putting on of Christ in baptism and their participation in the eucharistic *anamnesis* of his death. To commit these correlative functions to the authorized ministry within the church is to emphasize their nature as corporate acts of the church rather than individual acts of Christians, and to exhibit the corporate character of salvation in Christ. But all this is very far from saying that gospel, sacraments and ministry are to bound to any particular theological, liturgical or administrative forms as to be incapable of expression in different categories, rites, or polities.

It is true that here, as in the case of the family, we face a difficult task when we come to survey the boundary between the essential order of the church and its varying organizational expressions. The question of the relation between ministry and episcopacy is an obvious example. As everyone knows, answers to this question may range all the way from the affirmation that episcopal ordination is essential to the ministry itself, through the claim that it gives fullest expression to the meaning of the Christian ministry and the milder suggestion that it is a historically tested and venerable institution, to the assertion that episcopacy (at least when presented in terms of sacramental order rather than mere administrative organization) distorts the meaning of the ministry — for example, by negating the parity of ministers or by usurping the rights of the congregation. Once again, however, there is no reason why disagreement in the application of the relevant criteria should make us scrap the criteria as useless, if the kind of distinction we are trying to make seems inescapable. We should remember, for instance, that the most determined "episcopalian" is able to recognize the compatibility of a wide variety in organization and administration with the essential prnciple of episcopacy, as he understands it, while the most rigid "congregationalist" can describe a variety of administrative arrangements through which the essential ministry of the church may be constituted and exercised. That is to say, whether those who apply it always recognize it or not, the distinction between constant *function* and diversified *embodiment* would seem to be widely operative in fact.

V. *The Question of Apostolic Order*

The analogy between family and church appears to have given us at least a partial criterion for the making of that distinction between order and organization which has seemed to us to be inescapable. There are, however, certain features of the essential and constant functions of the church which suggest that a fuller criterion is needed. More precisely, the inherent reference of the preaching and the sacramental actions of the church to the divine action in history implies that there must be a historical element in our definition of the church's functional order. Once the radical difference between family and church which this signifies is recognized, it will become clear that the analogy between marriage and the family and the church is inadequate, even for the limited purpose for which we have been trying to use it. Marriage is an ordering of a universal human instinct in the interests of universal human functions. The church, on the other hand, while its mission is universal, corresponding as it does to the universal human need for communion with God, is the visible setting of a kind of communion with God established by a particular historical revelation. Its function is to communicate the effects of that unique divine action in history which we call the gospel of Jesus Christ — to proclaim that gospel-history in its preaching, to represent it in its sacraments, and to maintain a fellowship rooted in that history and devoted to its proclamation and "extension." That means that the analogy between family and church has to be, so to speak, "particularized," so that we think in terms of a given family, distinguished from other families by its traditions and its physical continuity.

With this in mind, we can go on to observe that, in the case of the church, functional order is grounded in the "apostolic tradition," which embodies the particular historical revelation from which the church's universal mission springs. This is clear enough in the case of the gospel proclamation itself; the church's message is not a generalized affirmation of divine activity in nature and history, but a witness to God's saving work in Christ. Consequently, the church only functions as the church when it confesses the gospel, and not just the gospel as set forth or interpreted in any way at all, but the gospel as proclaimed and presented in the apostolic *kerygma* and the comprehensive norm of the church's confession of the gospel, while the use of creedal formulae may play a part in a corporate witness which must also include the preaching and hearing of the Word in the congregation. For others, the creed will be a partially independent witness to the "shape" of the apostolic *kerygma* — a creedal *regula veritatis* like that to which Irenaeus and other early Fathers appealed

as a kind of "key to the Scriptures" and a safeguard against false exegesis. But all are concerned with the primary principle to which both "apostolic" Scriptures and "Apostles' Creed" bear witness — namely, the unique position of "apostolic tradition" as the visible foundation of the whole structure of Christian belief, worship and life, and all will agree that the apostolic witness pertains to the essential order of the church, just because the church's function of proclaiming the gospel is defined in terms of the apostolic proclamation of the gospel.

The same principle applies to the Christian sacraments. The sacraments exist to communicate the saving work of Christ, not to express or transmit abstract spiritual values. Consequently, the church only functions as the church when it administers the sacraments, and not just any sacraments, but the sacraments instituted by God and transmitted to each successive generation from the apostolic church itself. The apostolic "signs," then, pertain to the essential order of the church, just because the church's function of celebrating the sacraments is defined in terms of the divinely ordained "representation" of the events to which the gospel bears witness.

The same principles apply to the "apostolic ministry," even though more complex questions are forced on us in our actual situation, confronted as we are with radically opposed conceptions of the role of the ministry in the church. The basic questions here have to do with the kind of ministry which the church must have if its fellowship is to be truly a *koinōnia tōn apostolōn* — a community bound together in time and space by its dependence on Christ and his apostles. The problems of the relation of the call and authority of Christ to the instrumentality of the church, of the respective roles of historical continuity and of the contemporary community in the authorization of the ministry, and of the necessity or otherwise of a particular historical form of ministerial order, should all be noted as relevant to the broad issue. Assuming for our purposes that the call of Christ and the instrumentality of the church cannot be completely isolated from each other, we may usefully consider certain typical theories of the way in which the church's instrumentality is exercised.

A. A good many of those who are concerned with this general problem will argue that the true continuity and essential unity of the church's life are to be found in the gospel proclaimed and in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper observed, and that the ministry is quite simply a function of the community thus constituted. That some who share this general position would prefer to speak of "ordinances" rather than of "sacraments," and would in effect regard

the administration of baptism to "believers" alone as a matter of order, should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the acceptance of this basic interpretation of continuity, unity, and ministerial authority cuts across certain otherwise significant confessional divisions. The adoption of this view will not mean that the importance of visible fellowship under properly constituted leadership is overlooked in the definition of church order. It will mean, however, that the actual constitution of the ministry in a particular Christian community may legitimately be determined by that community in response to contemporary needs and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, since no one form of order or type of ministry will be regarded as essential or even normative for the church.

B. Others, on the contrary — and this disagreement would seem to be one of our deepest divisions in the area of church order — will see an authoritative ministry, distinguished from the community as a whole and with a commission which is in no sense mediated by the congregation, as normative for (or perhaps even constitutive of) the common life of the church. Those who think in these terms will see in the apostles of Christ the prototype of all public ministries in the church, and will think of the contemporary ministry as in some way possessing certain elements of apostolic authority. Furthermore, some of them at least will find in the primitive church an apostolic pattern of the ministry, to which the later church is bound to conform. These concepts of apostolic authority and apostolic order will further be said by some to involve a ministry historically continuous with the apostles and the apostolic authority, and this will commonly lead to the assertion that the required historical continuity is uniquely maintained by God through the episcopate and the succession of episcopal consecrations.

C. There will also, however, be those who maintain something of a mediating position. For some, the succession of presbyters will seem an adequate medium of ministerial continuity. Furthermore, many who believe that Christ has appointed an authoritative ministry within the church will assert that the ministry is also, in part, representative of a ministerial charge laid by Christ upon the whole body, and will draw from this the conclusion that the ministry is not so tied to an historical chain of officers that it cannot at need be reconstituted from the body of the church according to the apostolic norm contained in the Scriptures.

Theology and history would appear to be inextricably interwoven in the assessment and defence of these divergent views. Those, for example, who regard forms of ministry as a matter of secondary organization rather than primary order will stress the absence of any

biblical record of dominical or apostolic directions for the establishment of a specific ministerial order or orders or for the maintenance of the Christian ministry by some kind of sacramental continuity. Others will see decisive significance in the fact that the terms *episkopos* and *presbyteros* are used in the New Testament for the same office, and will assert that, once the apostles' unique commission came to an end, there was essentially only one ministerial order in the church — namely, the ministry of word and sacraments — which is normative for all succeeding ages, although at times minor differentiations may appear within the one episcopate-presbyterate. Still others will maintain the necessity (or at least the normative character) of the episcopally ordered threefold ministry. They will start from what they regard as the significant fact of the apostolic commission and, without denying the ambiguities of the historical evidence, will argue that the same second-century church which witnessed to the apostolic Scriptures of the New Testament canon also witnessed to the episcopate as continuing those elements of the apostolic authority which were at once transmissible and permanently significant, and that this "apostolic succession" has been transmitted ever since by a process which included episcopal ordination.

While the diversity of doctrines of church order at the level of the ministry is obviously such an irreducible diversity as to make any compromise formula impossible, we may perhaps claim at least that there is a common substratum on which all views ultimately rest. This common ground can be stated in the proposition that the church only functions as the church when it maintains the ministry, and not just any ministry, but the true Christian ministry which Christ wills for his church and to which the apostolic tradition bears witness. However divergent our interpretations of the apostolic tradition and of the will of Christ to which it testifies, we do not question the necessity of the ministerial function for the ordering of the church as a visible society.

It is time to sum up this discussion of the apostolic gospel, the apostolic sacraments and the apostolic ministry. It seems obvious enough that the church has certain functions which it must perform in obedience to its Lord and apart from which it cannot rightly claim to be the church, while at the same time it is clear that a wide variety of modes of performance is quite compatible with the integrity of the essential functions. Going on from this point to attempt an application of the distinction between primary function and secondary mode, we may suggest that the criteria of *functional order* and of *apostolicity,* taken together as our principle of discrimination between order and organization in that unique human institution which, in the hidden

mystery of its life, is the Body of Christ, will lead to certain preliminary conclusions. We shall be led by these criteria to recognize that, while catechisms, liturgies, and polities (in the sense of arrangements for church government) belong to the sphere of organization, the apostolic tradition of doctrine as embodied in Scripture (and, according to many, in the creeds as well) belongs, together with the sacraments and the ministry, to the church's fundamental order. This order must inevitably find expression in a more or less explicitly organized pattern of instruction, worship, and government, and we can never expect to find order in a state of naked innocence, unhampered by the clothing of secondary organization. Nonetheless, it is the visible body of order as such that belongs to the *esse* of the church as the people of God in history, while the adiaphora or organization can be changed again and again without touching the essence of the church's divine mission.

VI. *Apostolic Order and Ecclesiastical Authority*

So far we have simply tried to formulate a theoretical distinction between "order" and "organization," by distinguishing the constant functions of the church, rooted in the self-revelation of God in Christ, from the continually changing ways in which those functions are actually carried out in the ongoing life of the church. It is obvious, however, that another question must be raised and discussed before we can pretend that the problem of order and organization has been comprehensively considered. This question has to do with the actual relation of order and organization in the church at any given time, and it may be stated in some such terms as these: What role, if any, does ecclesiastical tradition or the authority of the living church play in determining the organizational forms in which apostolic order is to be expressed? In other words, are patterns of organization simply a matter of the opinion or preference of particular churches or groups of Christians? Or are they, on the contrary, subject to the authoritative judgment of the universal church and bound, at least to some extent, by its continuous tradition? Put in this way, the question is obviously a live one for Western Christendom in particular. On the one hand, the "Ultramontane" often seems to identify order and organization, insofar as he relies on the "living voice" to the apparent exclusion of any effective appeal to apostolic tradition as transcending the thought and practice of the church in any later generation. On the other hand, the more drastically individualistic type of Protestant tends to see the identification and interpretation of apostolic tradition as the work of the individual Christian, face to face with his Bible and secure in the freedom of a Christian man. Others, notably Anglicans and "confessional" Protestants, strive in a variety of ways

to define some kind of *via media* that will temper without destroying the relation of the Christian to authority and law.

In the light of our earlier discussion, we may set aside for the moment the extremes of Ultramontanism and isolated individualism. Accepting, then, the broad distinction between order and organization, while noting at the same time that organization is a matter of the common life of the church, we may tentatively suggest that certain distinctive conceptions of the actual relation of organization to order, corresponding broadly to diverse theories of the nature of social continuity in the church, deserve our consideration in this study. On the one hand, we should observe that an emphasis on apostolicity as definable simply in terms of the abiding identity of the gospel preached and the sacraments administered is naturally associated with a deep reserve towards the idea of the binding authority of the living church in the interpretation and declaration of apostolic tradition. The more definitely the concept of apostolic authority as at least partially continued by way of "apostolic succession" is excluded, and the more sharply exclusive are the claims made for the canonical Scriptures as the repository of apostolic tradition and authority, the less room there will be for the notion of authoritative dogmatic teaching and the more sweeping will be the claims made for the right and duty to work for the constant reformation of the church by the Word of God. While an excessive individualism, which would dissolve the public teaching of the church into a mass of private opinions, is eschewed, we may note a strong tendency to think of the church's common life as based above all on the acceptance of a common confession of faith, to which individuals give their assent in the light of their own reading of Scripture or on the basis of the exposition of Scripture by an authoritative teaching ministry. On the other hand, attention should be called to the natural parallelism between the view that certain transmissible elements of apostolic authority are really continued in the succession of bishops and the acceptance of the authority of the episcopate as the definitive interpreter of Scripture in the church. The more comprehensive the claims made for the apostolic succession, and the stronger the sense of visible unity and continuity as centered in the episcopally ordered ministry, the less room there will be for the exercise of private judgment in the interpretation of apostolic tradition and the more restricted will be the possibilities of radical "reformation." While a simple authoritarianism, which would vest the right to express the mind of the church in an infallible individual or an automatically infallible group, altogether apart from the consent of the church, is avoided, the exponents of this doctrine of ecclesiastical authority commonly suppose that the solemn and considered judgment of the

church, as expressed in the dogmatic definitions of an accepted Ecumenical Council, is irreformable, while its canonical legislation — e.g., in the area of liturgy and polity — is reformable only by "due process."

These alternative views of ecclesiastical authority, as outlined above, are better understood as tendencies and not as clear cut dogmas held by two solid blocs of Christians. Broadly speaking, the former view is characteristic of classical "Protestantism," while the latter view belongs rather to non-Roman "Catholicism" — the terms being used for convenience, and without prejudice — but many who share these general attitudes would not regard our summary statements as adequate formulations of their respective doctrines of authority. Even these broad outlines, however, will serve to indicate that the actual relation of organization to order is quite diversely understood in modern Christendom.

The significance of this cleavage for the concrete problems of Christian reunion can scarcely be overestimated, since those who stress the "Protestant" critique of all traditional authorities will tend to think of the building of the external form of a united church as in greater or lesser degree a work of construction *de novo,* provided only that the foundation of essential order (whatever its exact definition) is preserved, while those who emphasize the continuity of "catholic" tradition will be more inclined to think of reunion as the reintegration of fragmented communities into the "wholeness" of the ongoing historical life of the church. In effect, then, we seem to be confronted with two interpretations of that "catholicity" which should determine the direction of our efforts towards Christian reunion. On the one hand, according to a view which was in possession for more than one thousand years of Christian history, "catholicity" involves participation in a common life shaped by an historical tradition which is itself grounded in and continuous with the apostolic tradition. On the other hand, according to a view which has challenged the former interpretation and historical tradition itself in the name of a recovered apostolic tradition, "catholicity" demands the perpetual reformation of the church in the light of the apostolic gospel as declared in Scripture. Neither of these attitudes can be overlooked in a realistic appraisal of current approaches to the concrete problem of order and organization.

VII. *Church Order and Catholicity*

The diversity which we have noted in the interpretation of the concept of "catholicity" does not mean that the notion is simply equivocal. However it is understood in different theological contexts,

it always includes the idea of a standard or norm of authentic Christianity, grounded ultimately in God's self-revelation in historical action. Moreover, as a normative concept, it inevitably raises the question of the status of any Christian communities which in some serious way fall short of the accepted standard. The kind of answer we propose for this question will obviously determine our understanding of the unity, which, as we generally suppose, already exists among Christians, despite more or less serious differences in order and organization, and this understanding will in turn influence our approach to the problem of realizing our unity more adequately in the visible common life of the church.

Here as everywhere in the area of church order, the way in which the question is approached will be determined by one of two characteristic attitudes, both of which should be taken into account, despite the mutual suspicions of their exponents and the impossibility of reconciling them completely as they stand. On the one hand, where there is more or less of an emphasis on the necessity of the historical norms, more or less similar problems arise, which may all be summed up in this question: What is the relation to the *una sancta* of a community of professing Christians in which one or other of the elements of "catholicity," as we have come to understand it, is lacking? Whether we are Orthodox or Roman Catholics, considering the situation of Christians who are out of communion with Constantinople or Rome, or Anglicans wrestling with the question of the ecclesiastical status of non-episcopal communities, or Protestants trying to understand the position of non-sacramental bodies, such as the Society of Friends, we shall find that to stress the significance of visible order is to be driven to face what we might call the theological problem of "church" and "sect." On the other hand, where it is believed that almost the whole stress ought to be laid on the action of the Holy Spirit, this way of putting the question must inevitably seem alien and misleading. The implicit assumption that determinative weight must be given to visibility and historicity — even beyond the unique period between the Incarnation and Pentecost — will be regarded as so much defection from the essential spirituality of the Christian faith. In this context, the basic criterion for the acknowledgment of genuine "churchliness" in any Christian community must be the possibility of recognizing the fruits of the Spirit.

Without prejudging the obviously debatable issue of the true content of normal church order, it may be useful to choose a typical Anglican idea as an example of the first approach to the problem — if only because it is fairly widely held. According to this view, which is derived more or less directly from the "branch theory"

popularized by the Tractarian Movement, while the Roman, Orthodox, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches are branches of the Catholic Church, such bodies as the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are simply aggregations of Christians, having no more of a churchly character than the Y.M.C.A. or the W.C.T.U. Such an estimate is obviously based on a real concern for the visibility and continuous historical identity of the church, which seems to exclude indifference to any recognized aspect of essential church order. If it is true that critics whose concern for the maintenance of visible continuity and unity is no less urgent have found it impossible to draw the line between "Catholic" and "sectarian" so sharply as to exclude from any part and lot in the church of Christ a community which lacks some element of fundamental order, these critics will argue that the real power of Christian faith and the manifest signs of Christian life in communities which, from the critics' own standpoint, are radically defective, makes it next to impossible to deny that such bodies possess *vestigia ecclesiae,* or, as we might freely translate it, residual elements of true churchliness, which make it possible for them to perform some at least of the functions of the church for their members. We should note, however, that this qualification of the more rigid doctrine does not, of itself, lead to the conclusion that it can hardly matter much whether we receive the Christian tradition as a totality or in bits and pieces. The idea of church order as a functional whole, apart from which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church would lose its identity, remains paramount, and the problem of the churchly status of a body which lacks some element of apostolic order is seen as the question of its relation through its partial order to the existing, historical wholeness of the Catholic Church. Thus the criticism and qualification of the "branch theory" still remains within the framework of its basic principle of the primary importance of integral church order.

It is this very principle, however, which is radically challenged by the second and more "spiritual" approach to the problem of "catholicity." Without simply repudiating the historical forms, but insisting on their complete subordination to the activity of the Holy Spirit, who transcends all historical patterns, those who hold this view will assert that the norm of integral Christianity should be expressed in terms of the presence of the Spirit, dynamically and personally conceived. While word and sacrament within the ordered fellowship will be respected as ordinary means of grace, attention will be concentrated on the end rather than the means, and the reality of authentic church life will be recognized wherever it is believed that the life of the Spirit is displayed. Moreover, many

Protestants will naturally move from this positive affirmation to a critique of the alternative position, with its strong emphasis on visibility and continuous historical identity, as exemplifying mere "formalism" and "unspirituality." As a result, the "Catholic" who, from his own supposedly secure position, either denied outright the churchly status of certain communions or laboriously vindicated for them a minimal reality as "churches," will find himself brought under "Protestant" judgment and defended at best on the ground that the life of the Spirit has not quite been smothered by the proliferation of external forms. Perhaps this reversal of values will be for many the most striking expression of the attitude whose first question will have to do, not with the fullness of historic church order, but with the fitness of any given order or organization to express, here and now, the transcendent power and free working of the Spirit.

Stated thus sharply, these two standpoints must seem irreconcilable, as we have already suggested. We should be careful, however, neither to accept them at one another's evaluation nor to overlook the possibility that both of them may frequently be distorted or restricted in their presentation by controversial considerations. So, for example, those who emphasize the integrity of visible order should not be accused of ignoring the power and life of the Holy Spirit, since the ultimate reason for their concern with historic order is their conviction that God intends that order to be the sacramental instrument of the Spirit. Similarly, those who stress the freedom of the Spirit should not on that account be accused of indifference to the historical and visible, since at least part of their purpose in asserting the presence of the Spirit as constitutive of the church is to help us, in making use of the visible signs, to apprehend the divine power and love whose real means of grace they are. Obviously, there is a danger on the one hand of supposing that God has so bound his power to the sacraments and to the other visible signs of the life in Christ as to be unable to communicate that life outside the visible communion of the church, understood in the most rigorous sense. Equally obviously, there is a danger on the other hand of undermining the Christian truth of the real, visible, historical existence of the church, grounded in the saving acts of God, wrought out in flesh and blood. It is clear that an adequate interpretation of church order will have to avoid these one-sided errors. But it is also plain enough that no interpretation of church order can be called adequate unless it manages to take full account of the truth to which, in their very distortion of it, these partial ideas bear witness.

THE LIVING WORD

MEDIATIONS AT CHAPEL

Samuel H. Miller

In a world of fugitives
The person taking the opposite direction
Will appear to run away.

T. S. Eliot
Family Reunion

I

"WHOEVER DOES THE WILL OF GOD"

> And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."
>
> (MARK 3:31-35.)

If there is a basic task for ministers, it is to do the will of God. Yet to do the will of God is not a casual appointment handled with professional ease. Whoever tries to do the will of God will find himself quite unexplainable, even to his next of kin. Once that will has him in its mighty grip, he is deaf and dumb and blind to a whole world of sweet pleasantries and normal attractions. He seems cruel and ruthless to the very people whose affection pampers and protects him. He seems beside himself, stubborn and immovable, his eyes upon something they cannot see, his will riveted to something they cannot reach. There is no place any longer for his "troubled dust" in the comfort of their safe companionship. His mother, his brothers, his family are now those who share the agony of his lonely destiny in God's will.

Where God had spoken first to this man is hard to tell, but one thing is plain. There came a day when the Carpenter looked round his shop for the last time. Here was the place where he had done what any man could understand, and having looked, walked out into deeds and dreams that shook the world in bewildered consternation. If we could have walked into that shop on the day Jesus was leaving to go down to the Jordan, what would we have seen? The bench was swept clean, the tools in idle order, the floor clear of work. There was the silence of a place accustomed to noise — a cessation of labor, of tools put up and clothes brushed off by a man done with his work. But this man was done, not for a day, but for always. What had happened to him?

He was established in a good job, making a decent livelihood for a family, with little to worry him about the future. Why did he

leave all this — this substantial reality? What wings had fluttered in his thoughts as he drew the knife along the wood? What had his eyes seen beyond the shavings that curled from his plane? What was it that called to his intimate heart until his hands could hold the tools no longer with delight or his spirit be content to pour the labor of his living into the ox yokes and door lintels?

The voice of God had spoken! Silently as only God can speak, but with the power of his will as only man can know it. Then a man, no matter how busy he may be with his work, very useful work, will drop his tools, not noisily in fright, but quietly as if to lay them down forever.

No one knows when or to whom that Voice may speak and that Will thrust a man out of his ease into the terror of God's throbbing kingdom.

Little wonder the neighbors were confused. One can see them now, shaking their heads as they talk of it, perplexed or disappointed in him. As for his family, we know they were bitter about it. Here was a man whom they all thought they knew, a man doing what they could understand, making things they could use, suddenly moved and impassioned by something they could neither see nor comprehend. Reaching for a shadow! Stepping into a realm beyond their sight! Living by a light they could not see!

But let us come back now from this fantasy in the old carpenter shop. Let us look each other truthfully in the eye. Is there anything we should more certainly like to hear than the Voice of God, to be shocked awake and shaken down to a solid sense of unmistakable reality and honest speech. We are tired, tired to death of propaganda, ideologies, opinions, blurbs, and publicity. We want to find a word that means something, means it solidly and forever; means it as truth, able to redeem us from all half measures and spurious counterfeits of truth. God pity us, the very place where we should be able to listen long and earnestly for the Word in the very church itself has been taken over and glutted with words that have never meant so little as those cleverly manipulated for campaign and contributions. If only we might be able to find our way back to that silent carpenter shop!

Ah! the carpenter shop is no longer silent. It has grown into the world itself, swollen big until it has engulfed everything else. Now it is world-wide, its power limitless — it is called industry. Gigantic machines of incredible power and accuracy loom like moun-

tains beyond the man who runs them. Vast torrents of things, products, are spewed forth into an already over-crowded, cluttered world. Technics and transportation, atomic energy and threat of war over markets, bend and twist our lives out of shape. Man himself lives like a machine, grows to resemble one, adores machines and becomes a slave to them. A poor place to hear the still small voice!

I cannot tell you where you will hear it. You may stay all your life in the ministry and never hear it. You may have heard it already, but beware, you may forget it; for it may be lost in a church as easily as elsewhere. But until you hear it, you will be lost. When you hear it, your agony will be your peace, and you will choose it against every advantage the world so proudly and smugly offers you.

We can stand with our back to the carpenter shop now. We shall still listen for the Voice, but we shall scarcely expect to hear it there. It never becomes an echo of itself.

But if we look down the little street and across the fields; if we listen to the neighbors and the people that pass by; if we open our ears to the laughter, and deeper still to the tears, and even more deeply to the silences in which the souls of men are hiding, shy, guilty, fearful, then we may come to understand why this shop behind us is empty. The man who worked here had looked over his bench, far into the eyes of little children where unspeakably wondrous things were to be seen — at least for a short while, at least until they began to grow up. He had hefted the wood and fitted it into place while men sat nearby and talked, and in between their words their souls had slipped out and stood in quiet glory before the modest one. He had sat at meat with young families, poured the wine at the marriage festival, or mourned with the bereaved, and everywhere his eyes had seen what no man could make or unmake, a world beyond what lay on the surface of things, a vast world where God's hands moved in a mystery of life and death, yet a mystery always of blessing. That was God's shop, where often the very people in whom the work was being done, were blind to it.

Something else the Carpenter saw. Wreckage! The fairest and finest materials botched, twisted, ruined, wasted. That on which God had lavished the full miracle of heavens and the earth, the very soul — born of wonder and destined for faith and freedom — cursed with all sorts of terror and tyranny — living like a slave in its own prison, blinded, lamed, sick, and naked. Was there a way? a way to open the gate, to restore men to God?

The Voice was crying on all sides, from a hundred neighbors, from the throats of little children, from men grown profane, from the old who were lost and the young who could not find their way.

Have you really asked to whom do you belong? Who are *your* mother and brothers? He that doeth the will of God! Except ye take up your cross ye cannot follow.

II

THE WORD COMES ALIVE

> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "To day this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (LUKE 4:16-21.)

Today this scripture is fulfilled! Today! How impossible this sounds! Could all the dreams, the manifold promises, have come true in this moment?

Certainly for us in this present time it would sound incredible. Perhaps we should have to be honest and say outright that faith is concerned with the past, the mighty past when God wrought miracles, changed the face of the earth, and in fire and smoke made it plain he was present. Or perhaps we could say we are concerned with the future, that far off divine event when God will return and manifest himself in splendor and judgment. But today? Is it not the day of waiting? Will any of us stand and read the word of God and say, "Today, this is fulfilled! We do not have to wait! Religion is as real now as it ever will be! The Kingdom is here! The Voice and the Will are present — unmistakably!"

Yet of those who wait, there is no end. You must have read Sam Beckett's pantomime, "Waiting for Godot." It is a poignant story of two tramps, very much like ourselves, living in a world where it seems as if only the shreds and fragments of religious meaning remain. Their speech is filled with pain and pathos, hunger and petty doubts, and everywhere the bits and hints of a divine recollection that never fully comes alive. Vladimir cries out

> Yes, in
> this immense confusion one thing is clear
> We are waiting for Godot to come —

At the end of the play, after all their anguished diversions and pathetic disappointments, Vladimir asks, "Well? Shall we go?" only to have Estragon reply, "Yes, Let's go." But they do not move. They cannot. There is no place to go. They are waiting. And the curtain comes down as they stand in silent pathos, no place to go, only to wait, to kill more time, and keep on waiting.

What would it mean to any of us to have religion come alive? How well we know that religion does "go dead," and clutters life up with mummified irrelevancies. We know all too well that Christianity can dry up and become nothing more than the inconvenient dust on the surface of life. We can confess from the painful inside of the experience that there are times when the very vocabulary of the church comes to have a far-away sound; when God seems infinitely removed, infinitely vague, far off in his hidden Heaven; when the doctrines of faith, which once moved mountains, seem like immovable mountains themselves, great fossilized remains of an ancient upheaval; when worship, which once made men tremble, seems to be a refined and somewhat boring entertainment, conducted with more dignity than meaning. Like a tale told all too often, falling on the drowsy ears of comfortable men, religion drones on and on, like a pompous bore, and whether we wake or sleep seems to make little difference . . .

Far away? Remote? A hollow echo? A meaningless gesture made by a dreaming man? A phonograph record repeated again and again in place of the living voice? Men and women moved like automatons by the remote control of tradition? The whole thing enclosed in a vacuum of irrelevance? Yes! We must confess, it can be like that! A haze drops down over life, the near shore of religion seems to recede. We can hear the noise of it, but not *see* it. The soul draws back, hesitates to move through the murky fog, shrinks into herself, goes back to nothing, having been deprived of God. Thus remoteness may make religion the greatest unreality, and therefore the greatest hypocrisy.

But, in the midst of all this remoteness and unreality, a man may rise as he did at Nazareth, and speak with apocalyptic suddenness, "Today, before your very eyes, this ancient scripture with its far-away sound and its hazy meaning, this scripture is fulfilled, remoteness is rolled up like a scroll and with one mighty gesture discarded, and everything which seemed so distant, so unrelated, so meaningless, is now here, near at hand, indeed, woven so intimately with your very being that you cannot evade it, turn whichever way you will. It is religion come to life!" That was certainly a startling occasion, and before it was over, the man who spoke was driven

from the town by his onetime neighbors to the edge of a cliff that they might kill him. No remoteness in that situation. No hollow sound, no empty gesture, no droning unreality! Religion was so real, its sting so definite, its meaning so unmistakable, that the men and women who had been awakened from their spiritual slumbers wanted to murder the man who did it.

Several years ago a group of prominent scholars met in New York to relate to each other the case histories of what they called "Moments of Personal Discovery." Harold Taylor, president of Sarah Lawrence College, told of his experience while studying in London at the British Museum. He had been concerned with the economic revolutions and Marxian theories of society. Then one day he stood on a street curb and saw a company of Welsh miners who had walked from their shut-down mines in Wales to knock on the door of the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street and to speak with the voice that suddenly gave flesh and blood, iron set faces and hunger bitten eyes, to the abstract principles with which he had been concerned. History was transfigured. The words became living men. Their grim silence as they walked was a pronouncement that could not be smothered. They *were* history!

Blessed is the man who has heard or seen the Word come alive. Twice blest is he through whom it comes alive. To stand in the pulpit, to read the scripture, to announce the good news, surely means nothing less than to reveal that now, in this moment, God is here.

III

THE SACRAMENT OF FAILURE

> And he called to him the twelve, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, "Where you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. And if any place will not receive you and they refuse to hear you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet for a testimony against them. (MARK 6:7-11.)

Some years ago John Oman disclosed the significance of the above scripture by calling it the "sacrament of failure." This indeed is a bold combination of terms, especially for an epoch like ours, living in the reign of the industrial revolution, when all values have been transmuted into one kind or another of usable coin for self-aggrandizement. To elevate "failure" to the height of sanctity, or to the category of grace, may seem to increase the perplexity beyond elucidation.

Emboldened by John Oman's striking epitome, however, let us bring the point of it home by saying that the primary question which needs to be asked of every candidate for ordination is simply, Do you know how to fail? Nor is this nontheological, as you will discover if you read the second chapter of Philippians, where the humility of the Lord is described as *"becoming of no reputation."* Over and over again in the recorded sayings of Jesus in the Gospels it is evident that he avoided much that would have led to "success."

Do you know how to fail, to fail properly, to fail on your own terms rather than suucceed on the world's? Do you know when to step down and out of the competition which would reduce you to a level below the concern of the Kingdom? Do you have the insight to know when failure is your sacrament of commitment to God's will, and do you have the courage to become of no reputation, to lose prestige, to appear quite helpless, foolish, anything but equal to the world?

I know this goes against the grain! We are saturated with the motives of ambition so deeply, with the ideal of aggressive domination so thoroughly, that it is almost impossible for us to distinguish between meekness and just sheer weakness. The success value-system of the industrial revolution and the predominance of the bourgeois

class have corrupted us until we are blind to anything but that which contributes to prestige — ecclesiastical just as much as economic.

In the simplest terms, ought one not to expect that the Christian minister would live in the way Jesus did and not in the way the mercantile culture of our time suggests? Most of us want to succeed by the moral values of the industrial revolution at the same time we "succeed" Christianly! There is something nefarious about this confused state of mind. The Beatitudes are thoroughly betrayed by it, and meekness — the prime value of the Christian way — is eschewed.

This certainly is the gist of the matter. As ministers we tend to think that one fails because he is too weak, too stupid, too incompetent to succeed. Not so! A man may fail because he is too deeply committed to the Christian way to succeed. In short, he may be too strong to succeed; strong enough to shake the dust off his feet when the peace of God is not forthcoming. His sacrament of failure is a bold assertion, unafraid to withdraw from a situation where only success, and nothing else, might be available.

My spirit has been depressed recently in a rereading of Albert Camus' "The Fall," in which the confession of Jean Baptiste speaks to our condition in the modern world, to some degree at least, much as Augustine's spoke to his. Jean Baptiste, you remember, loved nothing better than lofty places. He had a "vocation for the summit." Is there any profession which hankers more than the ministry for the "supreme summits!" Like Jean Baptiste, God pity us, we "need to feel *above*." Sin we can stand, but failure we cannot. How well Camus says that "too many climb onto the cross to be seen from a greater distance!" Or that other penetrating phrase about man, that "he was absent when he took up the most space."

Perhaps this is why I love Palm Sunday, not the Palm Sunday lie propagated by prestige loving churches intent on world conquests. For a great many people the great, to be great, must be clothed with proper magnificence, accorded their honors in proper ceremonials, and parade with fanfare of armies and the shouts of the masses. After thousands of years of history, of dynasties falling and empires dissolving, we still seem susceptible to the hypnotic spell of worldly pageantry. That great parable in action celebrated the "sacrament of failure." This is the story of King Meek!

How hard it is to believe in truth, when it is stripped of success and power, or when the majorities seem to be all against it, or when it has no prestige or reputation among men! If it comes from

"Galilee"; if it rides on a lowly ass; if it has but a ragged following; if it seems to be imprudent, reckless, doomed to early failure; if it is an ancient dream or a new gospel — how easy it is to pass by on the other side of the street, smile a bit wisely at such credulous fools, and quickly forget them in the more practical concerns in whose interests we are doing errands.

Blessed are the meek! The meek whose strength is not in their ambition, or their success, or their victories! The meek whose blessing is in knowing God's grace, who are strong enough to fail in everything but one thing — they do the will of God. In this they do not succeed, but they suffer, yet their suffering is like joy. Shake the dust off your feet — and be on your way. God is waiting.

IV

"NOT PEACE BUT A SWORD"

> Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. (MATTHEW 10:34-39.)

He brought a sword, but it was scarcely a soldier's sword. It was a thing of spirit, yet it was neither vague nor dull of edge. It made a cleavage in life, and made it so deeply that it could never be totally forgotten or altogether hidden.

He was a divider of men from the very first. He was a door to life for Peter, a door to death for Judas. He was the revelation of God to John, a blasphemer to Caiaphas. To some he brought liberty, and light, and a great exciting peace, but to others only fear, and darkness, and a terrible embarrassment.

He cut a new line between the perishing and the permanent, between fossilized tradition and the living command of God, between faith at the growing edge of the soul and tragic safety at the center of self-concern, between the closed soul of the proud and the open soul of the meek, between the blind rigidity of the law and the fearless freedom of forgiveness, between the power which dominates by pressure and the spirit which liberates by love, between the new creation and the empty forms through which it once had passed.

The sword he brought divided the realms of life and death, so bewilderingly mixed and confused in this mortal strife. For once the world knew that full barns were not a sign of a rich soul; that garnishing the tombs of the prophets was a flimsy cover for the whited sepulchre of spiritual death; that impeccable respectability even of a Nicodemus did not guarantee any knowledge of God's work in the world, whereby all things are made new and the soul is reborn. There is a life which is life indeed, and a narrow way —

as narrow as an unpretentious soul or any casual circumstance — leads to its abundance. And there is a life which is no life at all, a frenzy of coming and going without ever arriving, of getting and losing without ever possessing, a life of unrealities into which men pour their days, their strength, their very souls, only to find it all split and lost in shadows beyond recovery; a broad way — for there are many ways to miss life — narrows down at last to such an empty zero, an ultimate poverty, a vanishing point.

Recently Laeta Wertenbaker wrote the story of her husband's ordeal with coming death. It was a provocative and heroic story. When she read her journalist husband's diary, it was plain that from the day he was told of his unavoidable end, he divided everything into two categories — important and unimportant. The coming death was a sword that divided them radically!

Dostoievski could never forget the moments when he stood before a firing squad, each minute an endless eternity. Pardon came, but the mark of that terrible ordeal was like a sword that cut from his pages every word undirected by the profoundest realities of human existence.

Death is not the only divider, although it is indeed a strong one, if a man consents to remember it. Most of us do not. The finger of God is in death to be sure, and in life as well. When his word is spoken, when the soul is split open and the eternal comes in, when the will of God is laid on man's heart, then a sword is put into his hand and all things are divided, deeply and decisively.

Man of God, wield the sword of the spirit. The ancient adversaries, life and death, are still joined in battle within the souls of men, however bland their faces seem. Be bold and mark the lives between what belongs to the Kingdom of God and what belongs to the kingdoms of the world. As Peter's successor, it is your bounden duty to loose what shall be loosed in heaven, and to bind what shall be bound there. And by all that is holy, make no error in blindness or confusion. Let the cut come sharply between life and death.

The greatest failure for man does not seem to be overwhelmed by powers and forces greater than himself. In the history of the race many a man has suffered circumstances too large to conquer, and men have remembered his tragedy with a certain exaltation. Seeing what he endured, they too are proud to be men.

No, the greatest failure is to be a fop; never to be earnest about anything, or at least not for any length of time; to shrug everything off, to trim one's sails always with the wind; in brief, to act like anything but a man. In the Gospels, it is said of Jesus that the "Spirit drove him." Well, any man worthy of the name, will know what that means. He will be earnest about some things, earnest beyond his own comfort, or pleasure, or convenience. Look at the man who is always careful about himself! No wonder we are inclined to say, "Poor devil!" Poor indeed! Poor even as a devil! Too bad a man can lose his human weight, his earnestness, and become so light, so full of froth, that there is no way to weigh him.

V

THE BURNING TORMENT

> As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ, John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."
> (LUKE 3:15-17.)

The living Word put on man's tongue is like a coal of fire. To be its minister is to be baptized into burning torment. To be called is a beginning; to be the mouth of the Lord is a consecration; to shake off the dust of every failure is a necessity; to wield the sword of the spirit rightly dividing the word is our duty; but to take our stand in season and out of season where the Lord will find us is bound to deliver us over to an uncomfortable destiny.

In a letter to Ernest Collins, D. H. Lawrence wrote of his creative experience in writing. "I know how hard it is," he said. "One needs something to make one's mood deep and sincere . . . It is hard hard work to come to grips . . . I always feel as if I stood naked for the fire of Almighty God to go through me — and it's rather an awful feeling. One has to be terribly religious to be an artist . . ."

Well, one has to be terribly in earnest to be a minister, too. Not that there are not many ways to evade the torment. There are, and many are in evidence, whether one goes high-church or low-church. The picture which James Joyce draws of the old Jesuit could be easily paralleled in any Protestant denomination. His very body had waxed old in lowly service of the Lord — in tending the fire upon the altar, in bearing tidings secretly, in waiting upon worldlings, in striking swiftly when bidden — and yet had remained ungraced by aught of saintly or of prelatic beauty. Nay, his very soul had waxed old in that service without growing towards light and beauty or spreading abroad a sweet odour of her sanctity — a mortified will no more responsive to the thrill of its obedience than was to the thrill of love or combat his ageing body, spare and sinewy, greyed with a silver pointed down.

The burning torment of faith should be utterly impossible to avoid for any man in the 20th Century. Did not Kierkegaard and

Nietzsche spell out the crisis with such intense seriousness and such radical disclosures that they seem like unbalanced fanatics? Yet they knew that to speak the Word of God when the very sense of God himself was lost was our severest agony. For Kierkegaard, ease in Zion was not the sign of faith; for Nietzsche, the death of God made modern man obsolete. To be fully alive, to be conscious of the actual conditions of our life, makes it impossible to parrot the cliches and mimic the poses of a previous age, however pious it may have been.

This is the torment riving the hearts of Dostoievski's characters. It is the torment of Ahab, that monomaniac of Melville's "Moby Dick." It is the torment of Barabbas in Par Lagerkvist's novel of that name. It is the torment of Kafka's haunted half-selves. And it is our torment, when we are brave enough to let it come out into the light. Otherwise, why do we plunge so compulsively from one meaningless activity to another, if it is not to hide from ourselves what we prefer to avoid. To be a success is easier than facing reality.

The living Word is a very subtle fire. It is very different from the fire that burns in our bones, or heats our blood, or fevers our brain. It hovers over the soul of man, disturbing, luring, making comfort despicable and prudence a weary burden. It is a fire set long ago, and the world will always be threatened by it, and the heart of man strangely drawn to it.

True, it is a subtle fire, but subtle or not, it will always sweep the dry grass of this prairie world soundlessly, until its cities and all the pride that built them will be the same gray dust blown by the winds of a new creation. It will drive men out of their sheltering races and comfortable classes and silently force them to thank God for such men as once they despised and held in bitter contempt. It will burn like a puny candle, a hesitant, wavering flame in the gusty heart — where a man may quickly quench it with the pinch of his logic-brain or the fury of his flat fist — but if he hold his hand against the wind, it will steady itself, and grow, and climb — until everything in his life shall be lighted up — the dust of time, the broken wreckage of sin's violence, the hungering void of God's absence. Aye, it will light up the world as well, the world of circumstance and people, until these too drop their masks of darkness and obscurity and stand revealed as messengers of God, bright moments from the anvil of his labor and wisdom. And that great light, beginning so small and weak that a man's breath might easily have blown it out, will grow so strong that the thick gates of death will seem as nothing, and the barriers of impenetrable mystery about the godhead will give way to joy and hope.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THEOLOGY

Nels F. S. Ferré

The gravest mistake most ministers make is to neglect their own devotional life. The next most serious failure, I believe, is their crowding important reading out of their schedule. Those who want can make time for both of these necessities of a first-class ministry. When they do, they will find their convictions urgent and their minds vital. My hope and prayer is that every Andover Newton graduate and friend find spiritual depth and intellectual alertness. The following few books I find of basic importance for current reading in theology.

Theological leadership suffered a real blow from the death of Donald Baillie, whose book, *God was in Christ,* is an example of analytical keenness and theological judgment. After his death there has been published his *The Theology of the Sacraments* (Scribners, 1957, $3). This is no full-fledged theology of the blessed Eucharist, but it is a positive interpretation by an able theologian combining the dedicated faith with the critical mind. John Baillie, his brother, includes a biographical essay, and there are articles, too, on freedom of the will and on preaching.

One of the top theologians is, of course, Karl Barth. Now at last a good deal of his writings is being translated. A short but weighty work is *Christ and Adam* (Harpers, 1957, $2), a Christo-centric clarification of the nature of man based on Romans ch. 5. The key to humanity is not Adam but Christ, the real head, the crown of God's creation, in whom all men are not only understood and declared sinful, but also finally saved. Christ "in His resurrection revealed the whole world's reconciliation to God" (p. 84). Those who can should read along with this book on Christ and humanity Barth's *Die Menschlichkeit Gottes* (Evangelischer Verlag Ag., Zollikkon-Zürich, 1956), which is just now beginning to have real impact in this country. Barth here makes drastic statements of change, repudiating his previous onesidedness. The statements, however, are actually more startling than the actual change! The great work now available is *The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Church Dogmatics,* IV, I (Scribners, 1957, $12.50). In some ways this is *the* volume for the preacher. Not only is the work of Christ treated with depth and power, but the nature of man is opened up with vigor, both as an individual and as a community. The central doctrine of justification stands out, but, for those who know Barth, his

treatment of general revelation under the Noachic Covenant, the Abrahamitic Covenant, the Deutero-Isaiah Mission of Israel, and the New Covenant of Jeremiah is especially significant. While I was in England last year, I marveled at busy churchmen who were struggling with this new volume. Find time for it! Besides these three volumes, there is now available a Harper Torchbook paper back, *The Word of God and Word of Man.* This volume is Douglas Horton's translation that first brought Barth into the American scene. Many are now starting Barth afresh with this introduction.

For those who keep up on clinical theology, a strong field of training at our school, there is Seward Hiltner's Ayer Lectures, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Abingdon, 1958, $4), that I have had in galley proof, but that will be out when this BULLETIN appears. This Abingdon publication combines case study with historical and theological inquiry. Josef Hromadka's Laidlaw Lectures, *Theology Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Westminster, 1957, $2.75) deal with the relation of the church to the world and were delivered by a Vice-president of the World Council of Churches who lives behind the iron curtain. The chapters are short, direct, and simply written. This able and likeable theologian speaks wise words out of the bottom of his sufferings as to the living relation between the church and ideology. The Christocentric note dominates the whole. There is much of New Testament Christianity reflected in the writing, even *its joy.*

Two books I have not seen, but which I am recommending on the sayso of my distinguished visiting colleague this semester, E. L. Allen of the University of Durham, England, are John Ferguson's *Pelagius* and E. L. Mascal's *Words and Images.* The former is the work of a careful classical scholar from the original manuscripts. In it a strong case is made for Pelagius over against Augustine, a most unpopular position right now but taken with conviction, care, and grace. Those who have read Mascal in other works know how brilliant and stimulating a thinker he is, although few can follow him all the way! Dr. Allen reports, however, that this work is "a better reply to the analysts than any of the philosophers has yet given us!"

Occasionally a truly great work on a neglected theological figure appears. Although Peter Martyr was one of the great theologians of the Reformation, he is very little known. Martin Butzer, too, has been neglected, but never like Peter Martyr. This towering figure has only now received competent treatment in English, and that in spite of his having lived in England for a time and having influenced

both the English and the Scottish Churches. Joseph C. McLelland's *The Visible Words of God, A Study in the Theology of Peter Martyr, 1500-1562* (Oliver and Boyd, 1957, 22/6) is therefore especially called to your attention. It is written with real ability, care, and power of communication. Its treatment of Christology and sacramental theology is especially strong.

Possibly the man at the forefront of theological discussion today is Rudolf Bultmann. He believes that classical Christian supernaturalism with a God who created the world, who came to redeem it, and who will awaken men to eternal life after death is unscientific and impossible for modern man to believe. He has therefore demythologized the whole gospel into man's possibility of finding authentic existence beyond anxiety. God is the power once for all manifested in Jesus to die to self and to find victory from self by such dying, not by decision as an act, but by the passive receiving of the free gift of the gospel. In his Gifford Lectures, *The Presence of Eternity* (Harper, 1957, $3), Bultmann carries out this theme with regard to the question of meaning in history. History is understood as the history of man, and the relativity of every historical situation is understood as having positive meaning through Jesus Christ as the eschatological event. It is most indicative of the modern breakdown of the Classical Christian faith that he who most fully repudiates it is hailed as its most influential leader!

At the Convocation this fall, Albert Outler gave our Green Lectures with exceptional power and depth. He is one of our ablest American theologians, and one who stands squarely for the full measure of the Christian faith. As the chairman of the World Council's Commission on Tradition and the Traditions, Dr. Outler has given much time to the way the richness of our denominational heritages can be taken into the glory of an ecumenical church. The order is clear, he says: The Christian event, Christian community, and Christian doctrine. *The Christian Tradition and the Unity We Seek* I recommend heartily for all those who are to read along these lines. Another sensitive small volume along the same lines, written by a Danish Lutheran and ecumenical leader, is Skydsgaard's *One in Christ* (Muhlenberg Press, 1957, $4). This deals with the most vital matters that separate us and should unite us, both as Protestants and Catholics.

Two books dealing with the Niebuhr brothers need only be mentioned. Reinhold Niebuhr's *Love and Justice* (Westminster, 1957, $6) is a collection of otherwise not published articles, while *Faith and Ethics,* edited by Paul Ramsay (Harpers, 1957, $5), are essays

written in honor of Richard Niebuhr by some of his best students. In the same way Hendrik Kraemer's *Religion and the Christian Faith* (Westminster, 1957, $6) needs only to be mentioned to a theologically informed reader. Kraemer continues to maintain an intensive Christian distinctiveness with regard to the Christian missionary method and message, but the mood is more mellow than before.

One of the most exciting books for a long time is Cyril Richardson's *The Doctrine of The Trinity* (Abingdon, 1958, $3). Here is a recognized Patristic scholar, editor of *Christology of the Later Fathers* in the "Library of Christian Classics" and Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, who rips riotously into this central Christian doctrine, and yet not as an iconoclast, but as a believer in the central realities for which the doctrine stands. For sheer fascination few volumes will equal this one. It set me burning!

After having worked for several years on Christology, I can appreciate more fully the depth and the centrality of George S. Hendry's *The Gospel of the Incarnation* (Westminster, 1958, $3.50). The subject is approached, in typical British fashion, by a painstaking survey of historical theology. But this is no book of notes on the past with a few shrewd comments on the present situation. *The Gospel of the Incarnation* is a genuinely insightful masterpiece, dealing with the main issues of the Fathers, the Reformers, and Modern Theologians, plus a definite, constructive, and, I believe, importantly Christian, position. *

Possibly the most important theologian in America is Paul Tillich. He surely is at the forefront of creative profundity. His Volume II of *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, 1957, $4.50) is by now no news. Perhaps all I need to say is that Tillich is one of the two theologians who have stimulated me the most. His *Dynamics of Faith* (Harpers, 1957, $2.75) is a useful short introduction to his system and his total mood. The fact that he rejects ontologically the classical Christian faith in its supernatural dimension of the personal God who is the Creator, Controller, and Completer of our world, in and through the Son who died for us and rose again, addressing himself instead within the discourse of modern man's assumptions, should not keep us from reading him, pondering him, and learning greatly and thankfully from him.

* Editor's Note: Dr. Ferré's own "Christ and the Christian" is to be published by Harper's on February 5 of this year.

A fascinating book for existentialists and analysts alike is Heywood Thomas' *Subjectivity and Paradox* (Macmillan, 1957, $3.75), in which the author aims to show that the modern problems were already anticipated and potentially solved by Søren Kierkegaard. The book in some ways is surprising.

In my experience of ecumenical discussion Gustaf Wingren, the successor of Nygren at Lund University, has emerged as one of the top leaders, along with such men as Torrance and Schlink. For years I have wanted him translated from the Swedish. Now we have his *Luther on Vocation* (Muhlenberg, 1957, $3.50) and his *Theology in Conflict* (Muhlenberg, 1958, $?). The former is a foundational work on the doctrine of the calling that has fed my thinking on the subject for years, and the latter is one of the most vigorous and rigorous interpretations and critiques of Barth, Bultmann, and Nygren that I have seen. Possibly his basic perspective of the gospel as dealing primarily with sin and guilt, with the place of the law in relation to these, and with the overcoming of man's fundamental enemies, sin, law and death, is too easily assumed and too much dominating, but as a whole, for any one concerned with the central theological figures of our day, here is a book that is both dependable and exciting.

These are only a few sheaves from the total crop, but what a harvest! Theology is alive! How well if some of that life would take hold of the readers of the BULLETIN! Then theology would come to its only fruition, the truer and fuller life of the believer and the church.